

THE BIBLE
AND THE
PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI
CONFLICT

DR. STEPHEN COHEN
DEAN OF CLAREMONT SEMINARY

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT
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BY
JOHN C. TREVOR, Director
DEAD SEA SCROLLS PROJECT

John C. Trevor

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School of Theology at Claremont

**SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT
CLAREMONT, CA 91711**

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I owe much gratitude to the Northeast Ohio Committee on Middle East Understanding (Cleveland, Ohio) for its pioneering efforts in awakening many Americans to the truth about the conflict. From that fellowship and stimulus sprang the first two chapters of this little book. It was Dr. Edwin Wright, one of the founders of NOCMEU, who sparked our concern and studies in 1968; and I am especially indebted to him for his acumen and expertise in documenting much of the second chapter.

It was George Nader's pioneering work in launching the magazine International Insight (now Middle East Insight) that provided the opportunity to publish chapter three in the second issue of that magazine. Again, I am grateful to him.

It is my hope that this combined form of these articles will enable their messages to gain a wider circulation and serve in a small way to calm the troubled waters of the Holy Land for the sake of both the Palestinians and the Israelis.

John C. Trever, Director
Dead Sea Scrolls Project
School of Theology at Claremont
Claremont, CA 91711

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FOREWORD

Thirty-five years ago I became involved in two world-shaking events, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the conflict in the lands of the Bible. Both of these events have revealed through the subsequent years a number of unexpected interrelationships. The Scrolls have forced us to re-examine numerous aspects of the background and nature of the Bible that have, in turn, cast light upon the unending strife in the Holy Land.

The thrills of those days of adventure surrounding the Scrolls in 1948 have now become molded into concerns that somehow the truths those ancient documents have revealed might be effectively communicated to the world to impact that tragic struggle.

Basically, the Scrolls are calling for: 1) a sound approach to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament; 2) an honest and objective method of interpreting Scripture; and especially 3) they are warning us against the misuse of apocalyptic literature (e.g., the Books of Daniel and Revelation).

Christians and Jews are being called to be honest with ancient history, with ancient literature, and with the text of the Bible, using the insights thus gained to bear upon that conflict.

Three documents have emerged from this combination of adventures, and it now seems appropriate to bring them together in one booklet under the title: *The Bible and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*. Each episode of the continuing struggle makes more urgent a careful and honest examination of the Bible, punctuated by the Scrolls.

The first chapter, therefore, seeks to let the ancient Hebrew Prophets speak forth exactly as their dedicated authors intended by their oft-repeated words, "Thus says the LORD!" The second chapter seeks to link the present conflict with the ancient past with the same candor used by those Prophets to their people. The third chapter makes a more specific application of the Biblical message to the ever worsening situation that could so easily involve the whole world in a human-created Armageddon.

I.

ON THE MEANING OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY

Every world crisis since the completion of the Biblical Canon in the first and fourth centuries has provoked certain Christians to search their Bibles for any possible parallels to so-called "Biblical prophecy." With the present military and verbal conflicts in the Middle East, Christians are once again being flooded with claims that the ancient Biblical prophets predicted these events. The widely publicized film, "His Land," sponsored by the Billy Graham Foundation, is a graphic portrayal of the process. Conservative religious literature abounds in the emphasis.¹ In the face of the added menace of a potential nuclear confrontation between world powers, it is particularly urgent that every Christian pay sober attention to the historic meaning of "Biblical prophecy" lest he become a victim of the propagandist's machinations. A little study now will go a long way in easing the lay person's mind in the midst of the conflicting voices and perhaps spare one the agony of disillusionment later.

THE WORD "PROPHET"

To understand any word fully, one must penetrate to its root origins, its etymology. For the word "prophet" it is especially important since it communicates an ancient concept and translates a Biblical Hebrew word. The English word is taken directly from an ancient Greek noun which literally meant "one who speaks for" or "on behalf of."² Thus the noun embraced the concept of speaking for someone, or a spokesman. The story of Moses at the burning bush is a good Biblical illustration, when in Exodus 7:1 God argues with the reluctant Moses, saying, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet."³ Aaron was to be Moses' spokesman, or to speak for Moses.

For centuries the meaning "spokesman," or "proclaimer," was the primary use of the Greek and later the English. In 1615, for instance, Jeremy Taylor wrote a book entitled "The Liberty of Prophecying." Today its contents would be entitled "The Freedom of Preaching," for

with the later classical prophets. The stories of Deborah (Judges 4-5), Gideon (Judges 6-8) and their peers read like stories of the heroes of any emerging nation. Security of the nation was their predominant concern, and sprang from their religious enthusiasm in which they saw God "fighting for Israel."¹ It is hard to detect in these stories the fine ethical and moral ideals of the Mosaic Covenant from less than a century earlier, for nationalism took precedence over Covenant responsibility. Establishing the security of the nation came first. The clear inconsistency between the militant stories in Joshua and Judges on the one hand and the moral emphasis in some of Exodus and most of Deuteronomy on the other hand ought to make the careful Bible student cautious about any authoritative use of these early nationalistic stories.

THE CLASSICAL PROPHETS AND COVENANT RESPONSIBILITY

With the stories about Samuel (a transitional figure) and especially the account of Nathan's rebuke of David, after he committed adultery with another man's wife, Bathsheba,² a new stratum of prophecy can be identified in Hebrew history. A man of God, Nathan dares to challenge a king who violated the rights of one of his people. The Mosaic Covenant Law had been prostituted. The condition which God had laid down at Sinai for the fulfillment of His promises of a land to Abraham's descendants was ignored, as David behaved like any other oriental despot.³ With the violation of the uniqueness of Israel's heritage in the Covenant — an ethical-moral social structure seen for the first time in human history — those loyal to the Covenant became incensed, and some felt called to thunder, "Thus says the LORD!" The era of the classical Hebrew prophets had been born.

Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah, Micaiah and Elisha left no personal writings, but an indelible impact from their Covenant concerns remained on sensitive minds in Israel and Judah for later recording. With Amos a new kind of literature appeared in the form of prophetic oracles, usually in poetic form, the more clearly to impress and preserve the stern words. Beamed to a recalcitrant nation, usually to secular-materialist kings and princes and often to religious leaders, their warnings were focused on doom and punishment of the nation for her Covenant-breaking.

that was the subject matter. Our word "prophet" and the ancient Greek meant, therefore, what "preacher" means today, one who is a spokesman for God. To see how the word was applied in the Bible to the spokesmen for God, one should read such Biblical passages as Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Amos 7:10-16; Isaiah 6:8-10; Jeremiah 20:7-9; and Ezekiel 3:16-21.

In the Hebrew Old Testament the word we translate "prophet" occurs frequently after the passage in Exodus 7:1, where its meaning is clearly identified. Scholars differ, however, regarding the origin of that Hebrew word. Some say it was a word borrowed from another Semitic language, Akkadian, from a word meaning "to call." Others think the word came from a slightly different Hebrew root meaning "to bubble up," "to boil" (from the possible relation to epilepsy, or the ecstatic nature of the earliest prophets.) Still another assumption is that there was an early verb meaning "to proclaim," or "speak forth," which was retained only in this noun form. Whatever the actual origin, these three suggestions, when added together, provide an excellent description of the classical Hebrew prophets. They were men who felt a deep sense of the Divine presence linked with a call to serve; they were deeply disturbed (they "bubbled" and "boiled") by the serious inconsistency between the behavior of their nation and its people in the face of the Sinai Covenant, until they bubbled over to proclaim the Word which stirred within them from the Divine presence. They therefore were "forthtellers," not "foretellers" — the preachers of ancient Israel and Judah who took seriously the Divine Covenant morality to which their nation had become committed at Sinai. They were the "Covenant conscience" of the ancient Hebrew-Jewish people.

EARLY PROPHETIC NATIONALISTS

The story of the development of the prophet-preachers in ancient Israel is long, and its origins are obscure in the pre-writing period of Hebrew history. There is no question, however, that the movement had emerged by the tenth century B.C., at least by the time of David. It was then that writing became a cultural feature of Israel.³ We might identify an earlier stratum or level of prophecy, however, among the so-called "Judges," whose charismatic nature, marked by religious enthusiasm, nationalistic zeal, and aggressive leadership, links them

A new era of prophetic preaching appeared in the Babylonian Exile, as the people's inevitable question, "Why have we suffered so?" prompted their spiritual leaders to assert more than just "The prophets told you so." With a punishment so severe — many Judean leaders were in exile, while most of the peasants were left in a desolated Palestine in desperate plight — the preachers of Israel turned to messages of hope and encouragement. They too, sought an encouraging word from the LORD. Already the classical prophets had laid a base for such preaching with occasional flashes of pleading among their harsh warnings.¹⁰ The word "return!"¹¹ had punctuated many a prophetic sermon as a clarion call back to Covenant responsibility.¹² But Isaiah more than any other pre-Exilic prophet set the stage with two deeply moving poems¹³ in which he expressed the universal longing for a just and righteous leadership for the nation.

With the Exile, however, oracles of assurance and comfort flowed from the mouths and pens of devout men of the Covenant. Some of these new oracles later became attached to the classical prophetic writings.¹⁴ Of all the Hebrew prophetic poetry, however, none can match the sublime thought and expression of Isaiah chapters 40-55, which present the highest plateau of inspiring literature in the midst of the Exile.¹⁵ The familiar words:

Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her time of service is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins. (Isa. 40:1-2)

begin a series of matchless prophetic oracles that pointed toward a period of Hebrew renewal.

The enlightened and more benevolent rule of the Persians also

A desire to save the nation may have sparked the prophet's concern, but it was Covenant responsibility that was clearly motivating his oracles. Amos thundered about 760 B.C.:

For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,
I will not revoke the punishment;
because they (Israelites) sell the righteous for silver,
and the needy for a pair of shoes. (2:6)

The first message of the first writing prophet of history was proclaimed in the terms of economic and social justice, which Amos had seen violated in the cities of Israel and Judah. A little later, Isaiah wailed in Jerusalem:

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;
for the LORD has spoken:
"Sons have I reared and brought up,
but they have rebelled against me.
The ox knows its owner,
and the ass its master's crib;
but Israel does not know,
my people does not understand.
Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity . . ." (Isa. 1:2-4a)

and he feared for the fate of Judah because the Covenant of God had been forgotten. Punishment therefore was inevitable. How otherwise would a just God deal with faithless Judah? And so on through the seventh century B.C. and into the sixth, these men of God warned, threatened and cajoled their people and their leaders. Moral responsibility, they sincerely believed, was the only sound basis for their security as a nation. Then tragedy struck, and Judah succumbed to the onslaught of Nebuchadnezzar's ruthless army in 587 B.C. Jerusalem fell; the people were carried into exile, this time in Babylon. The prophetic message had been fulfilled, as God's retribution descended upon Judah. Hopes were dashed. The nation was crushed. Thus ended the classical period of Hebrew prophet-preachers and their Covenant-oriented messages.

devotion of the men of Qumran. They, as well as most Jews, awaited the appearance of the "anointed one" (Messiah) who would lead and rule in the new age.¹⁹

It was, furthermore, about 200 B.C. that the writings of the classical prophets became canonized; that is, they came to be considered the sacred word of God — Scripture. Once having attained that level of authority, those books lent themselves readily to searching examination for indications of God's plans for the future and further goaded devout Jews like the holy men who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls. The original historical associations of the oracles from the preacher-prophets thus became secondary, as their metaphors and allusions became useful for interpreting contemporary events in terms of the impending end-time.²⁰ The prophets as "predictors" gradually replaced the "preacher" concept and took on a new significance, for every possible relation to their day was sought.²¹ Concern for Covenant responsibility once again became secondary. For the Christians in the latter part of the first century A.D. the attempt to prove to the Jews that Jesus was their long-expected Messiah added to this method of interpreting the prophets.²² It should be noted that though the men of Qumran used the same method for interpreting Scripture that was later used by Christians, both differed in their interpretations of history. Both believed, also, that their particular interpretation was revealed to them by God and thus had final authority.²³

Back of the figures of both John the Baptist and Jesus can be seen this mingling of the prophetic concern for Covenant responsibility with the apocalyptic hopes of their contemporaries. Scholars differ over the degree to which Jesus may have been influenced by apocalyptic literature and thought, but that he spoke in a context of this intense thought pattern there is no question. That he used its vivid imagery and many of its expressions there can be little doubt. That Christianity wrested itself from a dominating control of that kind of thought, however, in contrast to the men of Qumran, there is also little doubt. The Gospel of John demonstrates a move away from a preoccupation with the end of the age and reveals a viability not found at Qumran²⁴ which was crushed by the Romans about A.D. 70. But in periods of crisis, such as that of the Domitian persecutions of A.D. 95, when the book of Revelation was probably written, apocalyptic literature served as a steadyng influence for suffering Christians. That

sparked a renewed hope in the exiled Judeans. What emerged was a religious nation, however, rather than a political state. Nevertheless, the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of Jerusalem (520-440 B.C.) saw the revival of nationalism and separatism under the zealous leadership of Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah and Ezra. Covenant responsibility, other than within their own community relationships, again was submerged beneath legalistic particularisms and new nationalistic aspirations.*

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

The vast sweep of Alexander's Greek armies across the Middle East in 333-331 B.C. did not change immediately the course of Jewish cultural and religious developments so much as it intensified religious resistance to foreign domination. The struggle produced a new kind of literature born of persecution and suffering under tyranny in the second century B.C. It is called "apocalyptic" literature, from the Greek root "to uncover" or "to reveal." It expressed the human ultimate response to frustration in which one abandons his final hope to God. Born in the midst of crisis, apocalyptic literature was to continue to provide devout people facing persecution with strength and inspiration for centuries to come. The major Old Testament examples are found in Isaiah 24-27, Ezekiel 38-48, Zechariah 9-14, and especially Daniel.

A vast literature of this nature, however, never gained admittance to the Bible: Enoch, Jubilees, Apocalypse of Baruch, II Esdras, the Psalms of Solomon, and a host of others including the Qumran War Scroll. These were all penned during the critical years when Judah was dominated by the Greeks and the Romans, especially during the three centuries following the battle of Panias in 198 B.C., when the aggressive Seleucid Greeks captured Palestine from the Ptolemies of Egypt. It was in the spirit of this literature that the Qumran Community by the Dead Sea was established and thrived. The Dead Sea Scrolls were predominately apocalyptic in nature, reminiscent of Daniel and Revelation in our Bible. The hope that a new and mighty act of God in history would bring to an end the age of human abuses and persecution and usher in a transformed era of peace, justice, and brotherhood by a great miracle was the inspiration that spurred the discipline and

you the covenant and the steadfast love which he swore to your fathers to keep; . . .

. . . And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you this day that you shall surely perish. Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.

From the standpoint of Biblical prophecy, therefore, to evaluate the situation in Palestine today apart from its relevance to Covenant morality, the heart of the Mosaic and classical prophetic pronouncements, is to falsify the Biblical message and violate its purpose.

Christians should ask again the obvious question in the face of the Arab-Israeli struggle, "Is the God we worship One who works in history through geopolitical manipulation, or through people who respond in faith to His moral demands and spiritual guidance?" It is only a blind faith that identifies the God of Jesus Christ with the political struggle in the Middle East today, as the Graham film "His Land" so naively suggests.

According to the central Biblical message, therefore, the State of Israel today must stand under the moral judgment of God on the same Covenant terms that were proclaimed to ancient Israel and Judah, if she is to claim anything from that Biblical heritage. On such a basis the present events in Palestine cannot possibly be interpreted as "fulfilling Biblical prophecy." Instead we should be reminded of the poignant words of Isaiah:

Zion shall be redeemed by justice,
and those in her who repent, by righteousness.
But rebels and sinners shall be destroyed together,
and those who forsake the LORD shall be
consumed. (1:27-28)

the book of Revelation was written to meet such a need can easily be seen by noting such repeated expressions as "what must soon take place," "for the time is near."²³ Such expressions stand as warnings against applying the contents of the book to centuries later.²⁴ Apocalyptic literature represented a decided decline from the lofty heights of classical prophetic literature.²⁵

CONCLUSIONS

Indiscriminate combining and equating of quotations from apocalyptic literature with passages from the classical prophets of ancient Israel and Judah, as is done by those who claim that the Bible is being fulfilled in Palestine today, is therefore a serious breach of academic honesty and a violation of historical integrity.

On the other hand, failure to see the promises of God to Abraham in the light of the Mosaic Law and the centrality of Covenant morality in the stream of prophetic pronouncements is to evade the moral focus of the Bible. When we read, therefore, in Genesis 15:18:

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abraham, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, . . ."

and claim that its fulfillment began in the Partition of Palestine in 1948, we are misusing the Bible. That promise must be read in the light of the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy²⁶ and Joshua, which already record the historic fulfillment of the Genesis passage. But even more do we misuse the Bible when we forget its central concern for morality and Covenant responsibility on the part of those who would claim to be God's people who were "chosen" for responsibility, not privilege. Thus we must also put aside Genesis 15:18 such passages as Deuteronomy 7:12 and 8:19-20:

And because you hearken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, the LORD your God will keep with

¹⁷ In the Qumran Scrolls there are references to two Messiahs: one of Aaron (priestly) and one of David (royal). See the Manual of Discipline (1QS) Column IX, lines 10-11.

¹⁸ Read the Habakkuk Commentary of the Dead Sea Scrolls for a classic example of the Qumran method of interpreting scripture.

¹⁹ This new meaning, "predictor," for the word "prophet" was indicated in Hebrew by a new spelling of *nāb̄ti* as *nebh̄'āh*, which appears in Nehemiah 6:12; II Chronicles 9:29 and 15:8. The Qumran Cave 11 Psalms Scroll, (copied about A.D. 40-50) clearly demonstrates this new meaning by the use of this new spelling in a unique passage about David's many psalms and songs (4,050!) composed "by means of prophecy, given to him from the presence of the Most High (God)" (11QPs^a, col. 27, line 11).

²⁰ Compare, for instance, Matthew 2:15 with Hosea 11:1 and its context, and Matthew 1:23 with Isaiah 7:14 and its context.

²¹ See Habakkuk Commentary Col VII:1-6.

²² Read John 14 and compare it with Mark 13, Matthew 24-25 and Luke 21.

²³ Revelation 1:1, 3; 22:6, 10, and compare 22:20.

²⁴ Other New Testament apocalyptic writings are Mark 13 (and its parallels in Matthew 24-25 and Luke 21), Jude and II Peter.

²⁵ Martin Luther expressed the wish that Revelation had never been canonized, since it was so badly misunderstood.

²⁶ See especially the last part of Deuteronomy 9:5.

What we see happening in the Holy Land today is purely secular, political nationalism at work. It is the age-old human struggle for ethnic identity and self-preservation, and it must be viewed and evaluated in terms of other ethnic, political nationalisms of our day.

NOTES

¹ See, for example, Oral Roberts, *God's Timetable for the End of Time*, Tulsa, Heliotrope Publications, 1969; and Hal Lindsey's trilogy of Bantam Books, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, etc., 1970-1975.

² Greek is *prophētēs*=*pro* ("for" or "on behalf of")+*phemi* ("to speak").

³ In the Greek translation of Exodus 7:1, *prophētēs* is used to translate the Hebrew word *nābhî*⁴.

⁴ It is the Hebrew word *nābhî*⁵.

⁵ See II Samuel 20:24-25.

⁶ See Joshua 10 and I Samuel 15 for examples.

⁷ II Samuel 11-12.

⁸ See Deuteronomy 5, especially the last two verses.

⁹ Read Isaiah 3:8-15 and Hosea 2 for other graphic examples.

¹⁰ See Amos 5:4-6; Hosea 5:15-6:3; Micah 6:6-8; Jeremiah 3:11-4:4.

¹¹ *Shûbb* in Hebrew.

¹² Note especially Jeremiah 3:12-4:1. Centuries later John the Baptist and Jesus used the Aramaic equivalent of this word, *tûbh*, as a central focus in their preaching. It comes through the Greek translation into English as "repent!" — Mark 1:4, 15 — but it really meant "return" (to God and the Covenant).

¹³ Isaiah 9:2-7 and 11:1-9.

¹⁴ To study this phenomenon read Amos 9:11 ff. with 8th century B.C. Hebrew history in mind, then compare Isaiah 2:2-4 with Micah 4:1-4, and continue with Micah 4:6-5:4 as clear examples.

¹⁵ Isaiah 44:28-45:7 clearly portrays the setting of those oracles in the period of expansion of the Persian Empire under Cyrus, 553-538 B.C.

¹⁶ Study Leviticus 19:17-18 carefully to capture this nuance of meaning, especially in relation to Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 13; but see also Lev. 19:33.

deep emotional attachment for most Jews that has continued through the succeeding centuries.

With the acceptance of Christianity by Constantine in A.D. 325, Jerusalem became the Holy City for Christians, for whom it meant so much that its desecration by the Seljuk Turks in 1077 sparked the Crusades and its capture in 1099. Although the Muslims had conquered Jerusalem in A.D. 632 and built their sacred "Dome of the Rock" on the vacant site of the ancient Solomon's Temple in 691, they tolerated the Christian devotion to their holy places for most of the intervening centuries. Jerusalem became, therefore, a uniquely sacred center for the three great Western faiths, unlike any other city in the world.

"Zionism," however, is primarily a modern phenomenon that was born out of the social struggles of 19th century Europe. For over 1700 years the Jews of the Diaspora ("dispersed" in all parts of the world) had spiritualized their longings for Zion and Eretz Israel ("Land of Israel") and had prospered in many of the countries to which they had moved. It was especially in Eastern Europe and Russia, however, that the 19th century brought Ghettoism and anti-Semitism (meaning "anti-Jewishness") with their concomitant persecutions and strife.

In the midst of the suffering, devout and concerned Jews sought a rebirth of Judaism, using the historic attachment to the "Land of Israel" as a means of achieving it. Some, like Ahad Ha'am, focused on the need for spiritual renewal; while others, like Moses Hess, Leo Pinsker and Theodor Herzl, stressed the nationalistic spirit akin to the Maccabees (168-135 B.C.). During the latter part of the 19th century, efforts to establish colonies in Palestine as a refuge for distressed Jews, especially those who sought to escape the pogroms of Russia, met with a measure of success. Wealthy Jews of Western Europe provided vast sums to assist the Jewish colonies in Palestine.

It was Theodor Herzl who, as a result of his experiences as a news reporter in Paris at the Dreyfus trial (notorious for gross anti-Semitism), came to the conclusion that all Gentiles, or non-Jews, were anti-Semitic. He exerted, therefore, a vigorous effort to provide a homeland for the Jews as the only solution to their dilemma. His *Der Judenstaat*, "The Jewish State" (1896), is still basic to the meaning of Zionism.

II.

"ZIONISM" - KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

The word "Zion" (its Hebrew-Canaanite etymology probably meant "stronghold") originally referred to the southeastern hill on which the pre-Hebrew city of Jerusalem had stood. An Amorite (or perhaps Hurrian) clan, called Jebusites, occupied the hill until the time of David (c. 975 B.C.), when it was captured by the Hebrews (see II Samuel 5) and became ever after the political and spiritual focus for most of the Hebrews and later the Jews.

The city withstood several foreign attacks until 587 B.C., when it was captured and destroyed by the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar, and the area became a province of Babylonia. After the Persians gained control of all the Levant in 539 B.C., the Jews who had been taken into exile to Babylon were permitted to return to Judea and by 516 B.C. succeeded in rebuilding the Temple at the north end of the hill of "Zion." Jerusalem was gradually restored to a measure of its former significance and its walls rebuilt during the next century, while Judea remained part of the Persian Empire. Not until 165 B.C. was the city freed from foreign domination, which had shifted from the Persians to the Greeks in 332 B.C. Under Judas Maccabaeus the city and a small area around it were brought under control by the Jews and an independent Jewish kingdom gradually developed. Its freedom was short-lived, however, for in 63 B.C. Pompey captured the area and made it a province of Rome's far-flung empire. But Zion-Jerusalem flourished, and the Temple was magnified with splendor under Herod.

In A.D. 66 zealous nationalist Jews, (the Zealots), revolted against Rome's oppressive rule. Four years later Jerusalem and its sacred Temple lay in ruins. In A.D. 135 the Romans crushed a second Jewish revolt and refused admission to Jerusalem to any Jews "on pain of death." Since then the faith of devout Jews has continued to include Zion (often extended to mean all of Palestine) in liturgy, prayers, and hymns (see Psalm 137). Thus "Zion" became a spiritual symbol with

one factor that gradually awakened their Arab neighbors to the dangers of Jewish immigration.

Herzl's concepts were passed on, after his death in 1904, to Chaim Weizmann, a Russian-born Jew who first moved to Switzerland, then to Great Britain. There, as a chemist at the University of Manchester, he discovered an acetate which made possible a far more powerful explosive - cordite. His discovery brought him to the attention of the War Department and the British Cabinet in 1916. He at once used this opportunity to implement Herzl's program. In his correspondence with Lord Cecil in the summer of 1917, he made a deal with the British government. The British should conquer Palestine from the Ottoman Empire, hold it in trust for the Jewish "nation," open it up to unlimited Jewish immigration; and then when the Jews became a majority and could establish dominance, the Arabs were to be moved out so as to establish an exclusively Jewish nation, which would then serve British interests in the Near East.²

In the meantime, the British were secretly negotiating with the Arabs to persuade them to revolt against the Ottoman Sultan. In return they were promising the Arabs independence.³ As is well known, under T.E. Lawrence and General Allenby the Turks were defeated and the British took over Jerusalem December 9, 1917, and all the Levant in 1918.

As a result of Zionist pressures, however, on November 2, 1917, the famed Balfour Declaration was issued using the words, "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people. . . ." The Declaration was careful to state, however: ". . . it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. . . ."

The Zionists tended to ignore the second part of the statement as they pressured Britain to help them carry out the first part, until in 1922 and again in 1939 "white papers" were issued to make it clear that the Balfour Declaration was not intended to support the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

Under his energetic leadership the first Zionist Congress gathered in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897; and from it emerged the World Zionist Organization.

Inasmuch as the phrases and conceptions of Herzl's Zionism are repeated constantly by modern spokesmen for Israel, it is important to state them at this point. Herzl insisted all Jews must migrate to Palestine, an item found in Point 2 of the Basel Program. (There were estimated to be 14 million Jews in the world in 1897.) He maintained that if any Jews did not migrate after the State was founded but only helped with financial donations, they should be classed as "anti-Semitic" even if parading in "the robes of Jewish philanthropy."¹ There were two corollaries which followed: (1) The area must be large enough to accommodate the Jewish nation, which he designated as a restoration of the Kingdoms of David and Solomon or, in another phrase, "from Suez to the Cappadocian Mountains" (in modern Turkey). (2) From this large area "the penniless population (the Arabs, whom he does not mention by name) must be expelled".²

Modern Zionism was thus born as a socio-political, nationalistic movement, rather than the spiritual renaissance envisaged by Ahad Ha'am. The movement was not born without strife; and only a minority of Jews, mostly German and Russian, followed the vivacious Herzl, who mounted a vigorous propaganda campaign to win world-wide Jewry to his secular Jewish State Ideal. Brief consideration was given to a British proposal (1903) that the state be established in a part of African Uganda, but the great majority of Herzl's followers would consider no place for Eretz Israel except Palestine. But Herzl and the Zionists were quite unprepared to face the problem of the native population of Palestine. Precise population figures for the area are difficult to secure, but we know that over 600,000 Arab Muslims and Christians inhabited Palestine in 1914. Yet before he visited Palestine, Herzl had proclaimed, "I shall lead a people without a country to a country without a people."

Jewish students who studied in the "Gymnasia" in Tel Aviv were subjected in those early days of political Zionism to a constant reiteration of the words 'amenu, 'artzenu, and maledetenu, which meant for them "our nation," "our country," and "our homeland" —

It was the revelation from Hitler's death camps in May 1945 - the "holocaust" - that shocked the world into concern and support of the Zionist program. Pressures on the British to increase Jewish immigration as a means of solving the Jewish dilemma in Germany came from every direction. But Arab resistance mounted. Jewish militants responded by forming the Irgun Zvai Leumi, the Stern Gang, and other fanatical groups to carry out guerrilla-type maneuvers to terrorize the Palestinian Arabs and frustrate the British. In February 1947 the British, wearied from strife, turned over the Mandate to the infant United Nations Organization as its first test of strength.⁷

The Jewish Agency, an embryonic government structure headquartered in Jerusalem, meanwhile gained in strength with the British leaders and developed the Haganah ostensibly as a "police force" to help keep peace, but actually it was an army to prepare for the anticipated State of Israel. The Palestinian Arabs meanwhile made no such preparations. World Zionism energetically pressed for the partition of Palestine as the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine prepared to report in the fall of 1947. After frenzied political maneuvering and by a very slim margin, the UN voted on November 29, 1947, in favor of a geographically and demographically unrealistic partition of the tiny country, barely the size of the State of Vermont.

Several months before May 15, 1948, when the British were preparing to leave, the various armed groups of the Zionists forced thousands of Arabs to leave their homes by means of various kinds of strategies, until by the time the British evacuation was completed on May 15, there were several hundred thousand Arab refugees crowded toward the Jordan River. The fulfillment of at least part of Theodor Herzl's dream thus came with the declaration of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, in the midst of conflict and anarchy.⁸

The Zionist dream of Aliyah ("going up" - to Zion) for all Jews has continued to be an important factor throughout the subsequent years, as immigration skyrocketed with the establishment of Israel. Through action of the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), under the "Law of Return," any Jew will receive immediate citizenship on arrival in Israel; and World Zionism looks upon the State as the home of all Jews, whether living in the State or not (thus most Jews outside Israel have

Meanwhile President Woodrow Wilson in July 1918 issued his famous terms for a postwar settlement. Among the 14 points was one that was to inspire many postwar developments: that self-determination was to be a cardinal principle. In order to find out what the newly liberated Arab world wanted, he sent two commissioners, Henry King of Oberlin and Charles R. Crane, who explored the situation in Palestine and in 1919-1920 reported that the Arabs overwhelmingly wanted independence; that they opposed the Zionist program, which King and Crane discovered "looked forward to a practical complete dispossession of the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine by various forms of purchase." They predicted it would take 50,000 British troops to impose Zionism on the Palestinians.⁵

That the eviction or removal of the Palestinians was accepted as a part of the Zionist program was made clear by a number of Jewish authors in 1919. Israel Zangwill left the Zionists because of this plan; but others, such as Alfred Hyamson, later Director of Immigration, advocated encouraging the Palestinians to leave.⁶

Strife between the Jewish settlers and the native Arab population, therefore, became inevitable, and frequent clashes occurred. Some, like the pogrom in Hebron in 1929 and the bombing of the King David Hotel in 1946, reached tragic proportions. The British, who were responsible to the League of Nations which had given them the Mandate to rule Palestine and Transjordan, were caught in the middle of the strife. Repeated commissions were sent out to analyze the situation and try to find a solution. All the while the Zionists kept the pressure on Britain to allow more immigration.

The intentions of the Zionist movement became more clear to the world at large in May 1942 at the Biltmore Conference led by David Ben Gurion, who said that all of British mandated Palestine should "become as Jewish as Britain is British or France is French." many Jews, especially some Reform Jews of the United States, became alarmed by this clearly political proclamation which seemed to them to threaten prophetic Judaism. They therefore formed an "Anti-Zionist" organization called the American Council for Judaism in May of 1943.

territory. The only solution is for at least western Palestine to be without Arabs and to achieve this there is no other way except to displace them towards the neighboring countries, and to displace them all. No Arab must stay here . . . and only if we succeed shall we be able to absorb the millions of our brothers (who are still in the Diaspora). There is no other solution.¹⁰

More recently (1972) the journalist, Yeshayahu Ben Porath, wrote:

It is the duty of Israeli leaders to explain to the public with clarity and courage, a number of facts — the first of these is that there is no Zionism, no settlements or Jewish State, without the eviction of the Arabs and the expropriation of their lands.¹¹

Gradually it has become clear that there has been a great "cover-up" by Zionists regarding the eviction of the Arabs in 1948 as the Israeli government and World Zionism have sought to blame the Palestinian-Arab exodus on a voluntary exit urged on them by their own leaders.¹² This accusation has now been thoroughly exposed as false.¹³ Amos Elon, the author of the recent book, *The Israelis*, admits, "There is not one thoughtful novelist, playwright or poet in Israel today whose works do not reflect or treat the guilt over what the Jews have done to the Arabs."

In an effort to hide the brutal events of 1948, an elaborate propaganda program has tried to paint Zionism in the glowing colors of humanitarian good will toward the Arabs. At the 1973 commencement of graduates at Haifa University Israel's Foreign Minister, Abba Eban, addressed them with this interesting paragraph:

Against the eccentric ideas of a small group of renegades from Judaism it is suggested that we act, not by combatting ideas through education, discussion and incisive argument, but by raising our fist; and indeed there are those that raise it. Poison pen letters are sent to Druze and Arab residents, born in this country, containing incitements for their expulsion in exchange

dual citizenship). Pressure upon all Jews to go to live in Israel is constantly exerted, especially upon the youth in Europe and the U.S.A., while not one of the almost two million Palestinian Arabs outside Israel is permitted to return to his land.

At the 27th World Zionist Congress held in Jerusalem in January 1972, the "Jerusalem Program" stated the basic aims of Zionism for all religious or non-religious Jews, as follows:

The unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in the Jewish life; the ingathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland, Eretz Israel, through Aliyah from all countries;

The strengthening of the State of Israel, which is based on the prophetic vision of justice and peace;

The preservation of the identity of the Jewish people through the fostering of Jewish and Hebrew education and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values; and

The protection of Jewish rights everywhere.*

A quick calculation makes clear the international problem created by the Zionist dream, when one adds to the over two and a half million Jews in Israel the other twelve or more million Jews in the rest of the world. Even including the "occupied territories" of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and Sinai, it is a demographic impossibility to fulfill the 'Aliyah principle of Zionism. (In the brief historical period of the Kingdoms of David and Solomon, c. 975-922 B.C. - which included not only the area called Palestine, but also considerable parts of what today are Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria - the population was only about two million.) Aware of the demographic problem that is so clearly apparent, the Advisor on Arab Affairs to the Prime Minister of Israel wrote in the September 1967 issue of *Histadruth* (Israel's trade union journal):

Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room in this country for two nations. As long as the Arabs are here we shall never reach our goal which is to become an independent nation on this little stretch of

dangerously deteriorating world situation is the primary task facing humanity."

Political Zionism is therefore a modern anachronism. It is high time that Jews, Christians, Muslims and all other religious and concerned people put aside their petty nationalisms and begin to think globally.

NOTES

A few references are listed should the reader desire to get fuller details on the issues raised in this paper:

¹ Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* (1896) was translated by Louis Lepsky under the title, *The Jewish State*, and published by the Zionist Emergency Council in 1947. The passage quoted is from page 81.

² See Herzl's *Diaries*, which are in two volumes, translated by Marvin Lowenthal, 1956.

³ See Erskine Childers' two articles: 1) "The Broken Triangle," and 2) "The Other Exodus," reprinted in Taylor and Teltow, *Palestine, A Search for Peace*, Public Affairs Press, 1970, pp. 76-96.

⁴ The McMahon-King Hussein correspondence was first published by George Antonius in *The Arab Awakening* in 1939.

⁵ Harry N. Howard, *The King-Crane Report*, Khayats Press, Beirut, Lebanon, 1963, pp. 350-351.

⁶ Richard P. Stevens, *Zionism and Palestine Before the Mandate*, Beirut, The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1972.

⁷ To understand Zionist tactics and pressures on the U.S. Government in 1947-48, the following sources should be read: J. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine*; Alfred Lilienthal, *What Price Israel?*; Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 69, and Vol. II, pp. 149-161; Elmer Berger, "Pentagon Papers - 1947," *Jewish Alternatives to Zionism* (Suite 404; 133 E. 72nd St.; New York, N.Y. 10021).

⁸ For further insight see John Davis, *The Evasive Peace*, John Murray, London, 1968; and Collins and La Pierre, *O Jerusalem*, Simon and Schuster, 1972.

for money. A constant effort is made by a violent, hotheaded group, recently arrived in this country, to stir up conflict between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem and Hebron . . . An article is published stating that the dispossession of Arabs is an indispensable condition for the realization of Zionism. . . .¹⁴

Mr. Eban denounces such activities; but he should review the writings of Herzl, where he will find the source of this behavioral pattern. Moreover, it can be traced many centuries before Herzl. The latter used secular terms but the belief that Palestine was given to the Hebrews when it was occupied by Canaanites and Yahweh (God) authorized the extermination of those inhabitants stems from the sacred Hebrew Torah.¹⁵ The idea of an exclusive segregated Jewish people is found in the writings of the scribe Ezra, who lived four centuries before Christ. Modern Zionism is a thinly disguised secular restatement of principles formerly theocratic in form and hallowed by sacred tradition. But it now tries to disguise the fact by employing more secular and modern terms.¹⁶

In the face of present world crises the Zionist dream needs to be seen in the light of the global dilemma as outlined by the "Club of Rome" in its report, *The Limits to Growth*. The closing comments of the report of this group of scientists add frightening dimensions to the Middle East syndrome that dwarf even the Vietnam dilemma:

Short of a world effort, today's already explosive gaps and inequalities will continue to grow larger. The outcome can only be disaster, whether due to the selfishness of the individual countries that continue to act purely in their own interests, or to a power struggle between the developing and developed nations. The world system is simply not enough to accommodate much longer such egocentric and conflictive behavior by its inhabitants. The closer we come to the material limits to the planet, the more difficult this problem will be to tackle . . . We are unanimously convinced that this rapid, radical redressment of the present unbalanced and

III. ISRAEL AND THE "WEST BANK"

After a full and joyous week in the Holy Land, my wife and I arrived at the Ben Gurion Airport early Sunday, April 20, 1980, with the thirteen members of our tour, in plenty of time to be processed through the tight security measures for our departure to Athens. For the previous several days we had watched the familiar blue and white Israeli flags increasing in number along the streets of every town through which we passed, and especially along the streets of Jerusalem, as Israel was preparing for the April 21st celebration of her 32nd anniversary as a nation. But we would just miss the festivities.

As we relaxed after the security ordeal, I purchased a copy of the Sunday edition of the *Jerusalem Post* with my remaining Israeli coins. The Post was fatter than usual, for it was a special "Independence Day" issue with a sizable supplement folded inside the main paper. As such a special issue, its contents were, however, hardly what I expected. Instead of the euphoria I had noted in previous anniversary celebrations, I immediately discovered a somber tone in the headlines and articles. In fact, the lead editorial concluded with a statement that set the tone for the whole issue:

Israel's 32nd Independence Day, rather than being an occasion of carefree celebration, should be a day of reflection. It should call for the renewal of the national resolve and the return to the pursuit of the Zionist dream of establishing a society which would be the embodiment of the best in our Jewish and human heritage.

As I read this statement I breathed a silent "Amen," rememhering the similar hopes that Ahad Ha'am had preached almost a century ago.

Immediately to the right of the lead editorial appeared a glaring headline, in half-inch high bold letters, "TRAGIC PARADOX," with the subtitle, "A change in Israel's policy toward the territories is a

⁸ *The Jewish Press*, New York, March 19, 1972.

⁹ *Temoignage Chrétien*, Paris, August 13, 1970.

¹⁰ *Yedioth Aharonot*, July 14, 1972.

¹¹ See the government of Israel printing office's pamphlet, *Topics #16, "The Arabs of Israel,"* March 1968.

¹² Erskine Childers, *op. cit.*, "The Other Exodus"; and Howard Sachar, *Europe Leaves the Middle East, 1918-1954*, 1972, p. 551.

¹³ Eban's speech is reported in *The New Outlook* (Tel Aviv, 8 Rehov Karl Netter), March-April 1973, pp. 6-9.

¹⁴ See Exodus 17:8-16; Numbers 31 and Deuteronomy 7:1-2, 20; 20:10-17; 25:17-19, where the commands to exterminate the native populations of Palestine are attributed to God. The books of Joshua and Judges describe the follow-up activities of the Hebrews (see Chapter III).

¹⁵ One of the best legal studies on Zionism is the article by William T. Mallison, "The Zionist-Israel Juridical Claims to Constitute 'the Jewish People' Nationality Entity and to Confer Membership in It: Appraisal in Public International Law," *The George Washington Law Review*, Vol. 32, June 1964.

A brief analysis of the crisis in Zionism is found in the article by Amnon Kapeliouk published in the French paper, *Le Monde*, April 11, 1973, p. 13 (the article is continued in the issue of April 12, 1973). It quotes several sources which argue that Zionism means the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs. Expulsion of the Arabs, according to Y. Ben Porath, a close friend of the late General Moshe Dayan, is an integral part of the Zionist program.

¹⁶ New American Library, Signet Books, pp. 195-196.

(among Israeli Jews) is still alive. That, too, is reason for hope.

As long as the Begin-Likud government is in power, however, we can be sure that the West Bank will remain under rigid Israeli control, as the stalled "autonomy" discussions clearly imply; for it is seen as "liberated territory," not "occupied territory," as the world views it. In the meantime Begin is counting on pressure from the United States to support his determination to cement the West Bank (and Gaza) into the Israeli hegemony as ancient "Samaria and Judah."

I am reminded of a front-page article in the October 17, 1977, issue of the *Jerusalem Post*, reporting on the fact that Begin had the day before sent Shmuel Katz, his close associate (both now and in their leadership of the "Irgun" terrorist movement in the late 1940's), to the U.S.A. to interview Billy Graham and other conservative Christian leaders to obtain their support and that of their followers for "Israel's cause" (apparently meaning Israel's permanent take-over of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights). To judge from large advertisements which appeared a few weeks later in leading U.S. newspapers (and paid for by conservative Christian organizations), Katz was successful. Frequent quotations from the Bible about the "promises to Abraham" and about Israel as the "fulfillment of Biblical prophecy" have punctuated articles, letters to editors, and the conservative Christian press in the U.S. ever since.

Since Menahem Begin has frequently turned to the Bible to support his political strategy, and especially because he seeks to sway the U.S.A. to support his political Zionist intentions, it behooves the Christians of our country to take a sober look at the misuse of the Bible which this strategy demonstrates, lest our country be caught in the dreadful dilemma of being a party to outright imperialism.

When Menahem Begin speaks about "Samaria and Judah" as having been "liberated" by Israel in 1967, he is doing so from a perspective of the Book of Joshua and other early writings in the Old Testament. Ben Gurion before him, and many other Israeli leaders have also claimed or implied that Israel's accomplishments have been inspired by the Bible. Millions of pious American Christians have thus been led to believe that what is happening in the Middle East is the

condition for reversal of her growing isolation, writes JOSEF JOFFE," and then followed a hard-hitting article such as I never expected to see in the *Jerusalem Post*. The article begins:

Why does Israel stand alone--isolated among its former friends in Europe, in serious trouble even with its only remaining ally, the United States? . . . Israel at age 32 appears as a tragic paradox . . . an almost universal target of resentment and even hatred.

The article continues with severe criticism of the West Bank policy of settlement building in the face of international opposition.

If that was not enough to give a glimmer of hope, coming as it does from within Israel, in the supplement was an excellent article about Ahad Ha'am, the founder of "spiritual Zionism" in the late 19th century ("The relevance of Ahad Ha'am," by Shlomo Avineri). And it concluded by quoting the very words that I had been accused by American Zionists of inventing, because I had dared to quote them once on a television dialogue:

Slaves they were in their country of exile, and suddenly they find themselves in a boundless and anarchic freedom, as is always the case with a slave that has become king; and they behave towards the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, infringe upon their boundaries, hit them shamefully without reason, and even brag about it.

Those words, written in 1891 in Ahad Ha'am's diary, now seem prophetic; but I never dreamed they would ever appear in an Israeli publication! Perhaps there is real hope for peace in the Middle East, if the Israeli newspapers can continue to publish freely such observations.

But all it indicates now is that there is a growing sentiment within Israel that runs counter to the Begin government's rigid policy and political Zionist determination, and that the spirit of democracy

Anyone who takes the Hebrew Prophets and Jesus seriously and ponders these questions sincerely and without bias ought at least to be moved to re-examine those parts of the Bible where God is described as a warrior God, as in Joshua 10, and see them in their context of early history. But it is precisely these passages, from a primitive Hebrew faith, that portray God in the role of a warrior which the Prime Minister of Israel is using to justify Israel's expansion and harsh treatment of the Palestinians, whom he identifies with the Canaanites and the Amorites (they were all Arabs) of the thirteenth to the ninth centuries before Christ. (Compare Exodus 17:8-15, Numbers 21, Joshua 2-8, 1 Samuel 15, etc., for other warrior God and Holy War illustrations from early Hebrew history.)

An honest examination of that period of history and this type of Biblical literature reveals the fact that one is reading in passages like Joshua 7-10 descriptions of a Holy War which was a part of the ancient human response to their concept of God at work in history. It was their way of making a faith response. It represented their testimony of faith at that time in ancient history. These testimonies are thus a part of the historical truth of the Bible. But the idea and words were more human than God inspired. It might be put another way succinctly: The Book of Joshua represents an early stage of God's gradual penetration into the consciousness of some human beings. That it was through the Hebrew Prophets and especially Jesus Christ that God became fully revealed is a basic assumption and claim of Christianity. To be truly Christian, therefore, we must test all things, including Old Testament Scriptures, in the light of the revelation of God in the Prophets and Jesus. Or, one should ask the ultimate question of any Biblical passage: Is this consistent with the spirit of the Prophets and Jesus through whom we see God revealed? When we ask this question, the obvious answer will show us why there is no basis to Zionism's or Menahem Begin's claim in the 20th century that the "West Bank" (Samaria and Judah) belongs to Israel. The God of the Hebrew Prophets and of Jesus Christ did not (and therefore does not) condone taking land from another people, regardless of who it is that wants the land, or who their early ancestors may have been, or what that land may mean to them then or now. In the 20th century such attitudes can only be viewed as human greed and

fulfillment of Biblical prophecy; and they have, therefore, tended to see whatever Israel does as a part of God's will and plan. Such an approach to the critical situation in the Middle East is so deceptive and dangerous to the future of Israel as well as the security of the United States that it is alarming and urgently demands frank and honest facing of the truth about Biblical history and literature now by all those who are concerned about peace in our world.

A careful reading of just chapter 10 of the Book of Joshua in the Bible should be sufficient to make clear the basic issue, when it is followed by a frank asking of a few basic theological questions. First, read that chapter through thoughtfully without stopping. Then go back and study carefully verses 8-11, 14, 25, 30, 32, and especially 40-42:

So Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded. And Joshua defeated them from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, as far as Gibeon. And Joshua took all these kings and their land at one time, because the Lord god of Israel fought for Israel. (Joshua 10:40-42)

With these verses clearly in mind ask yourself: If the God of Creation is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, does that God act in the way described in these verses? Or: Is this the way the God of my faith acts in this world? (The present tense is very important.) Then, perhaps you should compare Joshua 10 with some passages in the 8th-7th century B.C. Hebrew prophets, such as: Amos 5:21-24; Isaiah 1:12-20, 27-28; 5:1-23; 9:2-7; 11:1-9; 30:15-18; Hosea 5:15-6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Jeremiah 7:1-7; 18:1-12; 31:31-34; Ezekiel 18:1-9, 30-32; Isaiah 42:1-7; 55:6-11. If then the issue is not crystal clear, ask the next question: Does Joshua 10 illustrate the God whom we have come to know through the Hebrew Prophets and Jesus Christ? Remember, Christians constantly emphasize the God revealed in Jesus Christ as One who loves, One who forgives, One who redeems, One who cares for all people regardless of race, sex or creed. Then how could such a God condone or have been a part of such acts as described in Joshua? Now study Matthew 5:43-48, John

He goes on to show how the settlements are a liability rather than an asset to security. He describes their absurdity with the words:

. . . enormous wire-mesh fences, searchlights, grim watchtowers, armed sentries patrolling a perimeter separating a sullen and cowed Arab population from a small Jewish community . . . nothing but a ghetto . . . not built on hope, but on fear.

His conclusion brings the issue of security into sharp focus:

If Israel does not begin to distinguish between the legitimate demands of security and the increasingly costly luxury of quasi-colonial rule, it will . . . reap the unyielding opposition of an already resentful world. If Israel does not relinquish its hold over one million Arabs in the territories, it will . . . lose the support of those who are basically in sympathy with the legitimate aspirations of the Jewish state. In addition to jeopardizing the Israeli-Egyptian peace, the only ray of hope after 30 years of warfare, Israel will also keep possession of a time bomb that will ultimately undermine the Jewish state more profoundly than all the Arab armies together.

In other words, the only alternative to Israeli's return to spiritual Zionism is the continuing radicalization of the Palestinians and other Arabs until the "time bomb" explodes.

Let us pray that the April 20, 1980, issue of the *Jerusalem Post* will be carefully read and pondered in all of Israel, and that Avineri's article at the heart of the supplement will be especially digested by Begin's government. The time is ripe for the spirit of *Ahad Ha'am* to be resurrected into the focal point of Israeli thought and especially of the "autonomy talks." If Menahem Begin could shift his Bible study from the Book of Joshua to the Book of Isaiah, and focus on the inspired words of the Prophet, the road to peace could become straight and sure:

political imperialism, and no religion--I repeat, no religion--can claim otherwise and remain true to its heritage.

But Israel's argument from religious tradition is paralleled with the argument for "security." Perhaps the argument for "security" will soon transcend Begin's religious claim in the midst of the increasing tone of militarism that has been sparked by Russia's blatant invasion of Afghanistan and other Communist intrusions. True, the narrow "Plain of Sharon" coast of Israel is vulnerable to the highlands of the "West Bank," but so is the southern coast of the United States vulnerable to Communist Cuba. In fact, there is no ultimate "security" from modern military hardware between any countries of the world any more. The only genuine security in the world today is that which is built upon good relations with one's neighbors. Colonialism and imperialism must be eradicated from human relations everywhere in the world if there is to be peace. It is as simple as that; but it means the eradication of greed, the greatest sin, from humanity -- the goal of every religion. In this respect Israel is a microcosm of the world macrocosm. Here is her great opportunity to demonstrate her Biblical destiny to become "a light to the nations," as her greatest Prophet so eloquently spoke for God:

I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,
to open the eyes that are blind . . . (Isaiah 42:6)

Dr. Joffe's down to earth editorial in the Jerusalem Post, "Tragic Paradox," turns such idealistic reverie back to reality, however, when he says:

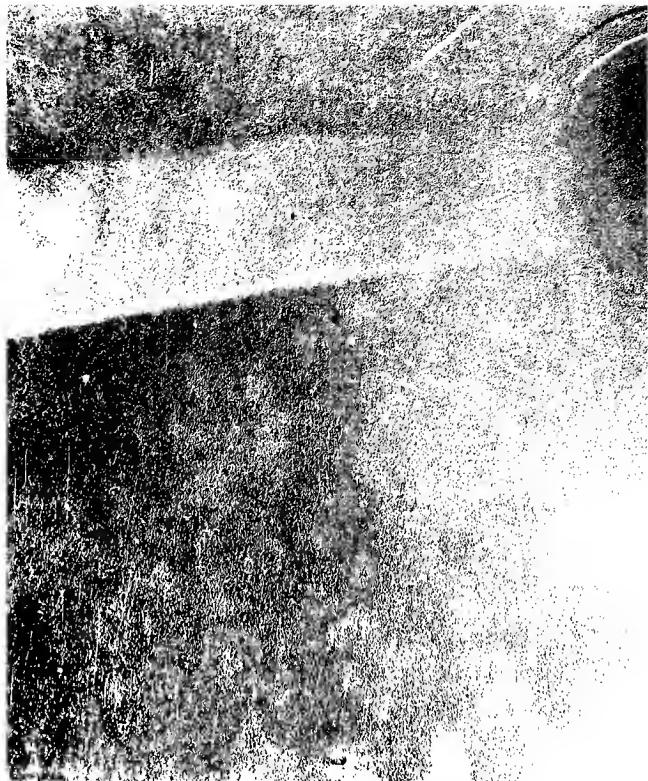
Israel is caught in a tragic situation where a handful of ideological and religious zealots have been allowed to pervert the national interest. The world has never bought the argument of a divine or historical right to Judea and Samaria; it has long since stopped believing in the ostensibly more pragmatic equating of settlements with security.

He (God) says:

**It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the preserved of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach
to the end of the earth.**

(Isa. 49:6)

Here lies the assured security for Israel, not in control of more Arab land but in an enlightened attitude toward the Palestinians and goodwill to all the world.





JOHN C. TREVOR



JOHN C. TREVOR

HOR

zement in the early life
leaving no central line &
impossible conditions to anyone
a new place where he had
a family, a home, a school
a church, a doctor, a
a grocery store, a post office,
and banks. He did not know a

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. John C. Trever, best known for his involvement in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, is a Biblical scholar, writer and lecturer of international distinction. He holds a B.A. degree from the University of Southern California, magna cum laude, and B.D. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University. He was a research Fellow in Palestine during the last eight months of the British Mandate (1947-1948) and has returned to the area six times for shorter periods of study. His illustrated *Cradle Of Our Faith* (1954) saw a circulation of 40,000 copies. His *Untold Story of Qumran* (1965) is a basic introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls and was issued in an updated paperback under the title, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Personal Account*, in 1978.

Dr. Edwin M. Wright was born in Iran to Presbyterian missionaries and later served twelve years as an educator there. In 1946 he was appointed to the staff of the U.S. State Department, Division of Middle East Affairs, serving most of the time in the M.E. In 1955 he became Assistant Dean of the Foreign Service Institute. He retired in 1966 and is living in Wooster, Ohio. His recent book, *The Great Zionist Cover-up*, was prepared for the Harry S. Truman Library and recently published by the Northeast Ohio Committee on Middle East Understanding, Box 16094, Cleveland, Ohio 44116.

him, and since it is impossible to
say in advance precisely what will
be the best way to do it, I would sug-
gest that you do the following:
1. If you have any specific
questions, write them down
and ask me to answer them.